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**Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations
Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and
Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of the
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**

New Urban Agenda

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.23

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/71/15) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.23 on the New Urban Agenda. The statement was submitted in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. During its consideration of the statement, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarifications, concluding with responses received on 9 December 2016.

2. Under the terms of draft resolution A/71/L.23, the General Assembly would:

(a) Request the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly during its seventy-first session an evidence-based and independent assessment of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The result of the assessment would be a report containing recommendations to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and oversight of UN-Habitat, and in that regard it should analyse:

(i) The normative and operational mandate of UN-Habitat;



(ii) The governance structure of UN-Habitat for more effective, accountable and transparent decision-making, considering alternatives, including universalization of the membership of its Governing Council;

(iii) The work of UN-Habitat with national, subnational and local governments and with relevant stakeholders in order to tap the full potential of partnerships;

(iv) The financial capability of UN-Habitat (para. 172).

(b) Decide to hold a two-day high-level meeting of the General Assembly, to be convened by the President of the General Assembly during the seventy-first session, to discuss the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the positioning of UN-Habitat in that regard. The meeting would discuss, inter alia, best practices, success stories and the measures contained in the report. A Chair's summary of the meeting would serve as an input to the Second Committee during the seventy-second session for its consideration of the action to be taken, in light of the recommendations contained in the independent assessment, in its annual resolution under the relevant agenda item (para. 173).

II. Resource requirements

3. The Secretary-General indicates that the request would entail additional resource requirements totalling \$770,500 in 2017 for the following activities (see A/C.5.71/15, paras. 14-25; and table 2):

(a) Conference documentation services in the amount of \$254,300 in 2017, entailing one pre-session document (50,000 words) and one post-session document (8,500 words) in the six official languages;

(b) Non-conference services in the amount of \$516,200 in 2017 comprising:

(i) General temporary assistance resources (\$81,000) for two General Service (Other level) staff located in New York for six months, from 1 January to 30 June 2017, to provide general administrative support to the high-level panel;

(ii) Consultant fees and travel costs (\$141,500) for the services and travel of two consultants for six months each, from 1 January to 30 June 2017, to assist the high-level panel in its work;

(iii) Airfare, daily subsistence allowance and terminal expenses of ad hoc expert groups (\$240,400) for the attendance of the eight members of the high-level panel of experts at two meetings in New York and one meeting in Nairobi (\$92,200), and attendance of the 18 participants, composed of the members of the high-level panel and stakeholders, at a workshop in Nairobi (\$70,200) and for a visit to a UN-Habitat field project (\$78,000);

(iv) Contractual (rental of venues and external printing) services (\$20,000);

(v) General operating expenses for 2 General Service staff and communication services (\$30,200);

(vi) Supplies and materials (\$1,000);

(vii) Furniture (\$2,100).

4. In paragraph 4 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that the requested activities referred to in the draft resolution relate to programme 1, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; programme 12, Human settlements; and programme 25, Management and support services, of the biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2016-2017 (para. 4). The additional resource requirements in the amount of \$770,500, for 2017, would arise under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management (\$254,300); section 15, Human settlements (\$500,300); and section 29D, Office of Central Support Services (\$15,900), of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (para. 27 and table 3). In paragraph 3 of his statement, the Secretary-General also indicates that with respect to paragraphs 166 to 168 of the annex to draft resolution A/71/L.23, regarding the request of the General Assembly that the Secretary-General report on the progress of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda every four years, the resource implications would be elaborated in an oral statement of the Secretary-General to be issued, as appropriate, in respect of the relevant resolution of the Second Committee.

5. In paragraph 4 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that the additional conference and non-conference servicing resources in the amount of \$770,500 for 2017 would be required under sections 2, 15 and 29D of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 to implement the additional workload. In his statement, the Secretary-General also indicates that it is not possible to identify activities under the relevant sections of the programme budget that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium (para. 28) and that it would therefore be necessary that the requested resources of \$770,500 be provided through an additional appropriation representing a charge against the contingency fund for 2016-2017 (para. 29). The Committee received confirmation from the Secretariat that there is no possibility for absorption of the requested resources under the relevant sections of the programme budget.

6. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the requested resource requirements for conference documentation services in the amount of \$254,300 that would arise under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management (see para. 3 (a) above).

7. In paragraph 16 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that two General Service (Other level) staff would be located in New York for 6 months, from 1 January to 30 June 2017, for general temporary assistance to support the high-level panel by providing, inter alia, general administrative support and support for the organization of the travel arrangements, meetings and workshops of the high-level panel. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that one staff member would provide general administrative support in respect of travel arrangements, expense reports, and any other financial or operational matters associated with the high-level panel. The second staff member would focus on the preparations of workshops (encompassing renting of venues, technical equipment, list of participants and background documentation) as well as provide any other additional administrative assistance related to the research or activities of the consultants hired to work with the panel. The Committee was also informed that the choice of two General Service staff was also based on the need for a minimal level of redundancy in case of illness or other mitigating circumstances. **The Advisory**

Committee is of the view that one General Service staff position is sufficient to provide the required support, given the short-term nature of the functions required for a total six-month period, the general administrative nature of the support functions required, and the fact that redundancy in the case of illness or other mitigating circumstances should not be an attendant factor in requiring two General Service staff to perform similar functions. The Committee therefore recommends against the establishment of one General Service staff position and recommends the approval of one General Service staff position as general temporary assistance to support the high-level panel of experts. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.

8. In paragraphs 17 and 18 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that resources for the services and travel of two consultants (\$141,500) for six months each, from 1 January to 30 June 2017, to assist the high-level panel in its work would be required to enable the consultants to oversee the compilation of evidence-based cases for the high-level panel, record the panel's conclusions and recommendations and work with the high-level panel to draft its final report. In addition, the consultants would be actively involved in the presentations and facilitation of the panel's meetings and workshops. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the New Urban Agenda calls for an evidence-based and independent assessment of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and that consultants would be needed to help develop the evidence base, enhance the independent nature of the assessment, support the high-level panel in the drafting of its report and facilitate its meetings through the analytical support provided to the panel in focusing its conclusions and recommendations, and prepare concept notes and case analysis for discussion by the panel. The Committee was also informed, upon enquiry, that according to the status of expenditures as of 31 October 2016 under budget section 15 of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, UN-Habitat has an implementation rate of 28 per cent under consultants and experts. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the explanation provided is not comprehensive, as it does not adequately explain the scope and nature of the requirement for the two consultants. In the view of the Committee, the request for additional resources does not seem fully justified at this stage, given the availability of existing resources related to consultants and experts within UN-Habitat (see para. 11 below).**

9. In paragraph 21 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that resources for contractual services (\$20,000) are required to provide for the high-level panel's meetings and workshops and for the printing of associated materials. The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the requirement encompasses the printing of materials relating to concept notes and discussion papers required in the course of the panel's work and cost-recovery for meeting services provided on United Nations premises, as well as extra costs relating to the location of the field workshop, should adequate meeting space not be available. The Committee was also informed upon enquiry that according to the status of expenditures as of 31 October 2016 under section 15 of the programme budget, UN-Habitat has an implementation rate of 22 per cent under contractual services. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the Organization's premises should be used for panel workshops and meetings whenever possible, in order that the incurring of additional expenses for the use of external facilities may be**

avoided. In the view of the Committee, the request for additional resources does not seem fully justified at this stage, given the availability of existing resources related to contractual services within UN-Habitat (see para. 11 below).

10. Resources are requested for travel, as indicated in table 2 of the statement of the Secretary-General (see also A/C.5/71/15, paras. 19 and 20), entailing travel of the eight members of the high-level panel to two meetings in New York and one in Nairobi as well as participation of the 18 participants (8 high-level panel members and 10 stakeholders) in two workshops, one in the field and one in Nairobi. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that it is planned that the second meeting of the high-level panel will be organized in Nairobi in March 2017 so as to enable it to benefit from interviews and discussions with the members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat. The workshop in Nairobi is intended to coincide with the session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, scheduled to be held in May 2017. The Committee welcomes the intention to schedule the holding of the workshop in conjunction with other UN-Habitat-related meetings, with a view to profiting from the expertise of stakeholders, and encourages further efficiencies in this regard. In paragraph 7 of his statement, the Secretary-General indicates that the panel would be composed of members belonging to any of four categories and that two of the members would belong to the category of permanent representative of a State Member to the United Nations in New York. Nevertheless, the Secretariat has requested resources for all travel to New York irrespective of the location of the panel members.

III. Conclusion

11. Considering that the details provided in the statement of the Secretary-General and upon enquiry are unclear in terms of the resources requested (see paras. 8 and 9 above), the Advisory Committee recommends:

(a) That following the reduction of the resources requested for one General Service (Other level) post and its related non-post requirements, a reduction of 15 per cent in the amount of \$60,300 should be applied to the remaining proposed resource requirements under section 15 of the programme budget for the biennium;

(b) Approval of the remaining proposed resource requirements, amounting to \$390,800 under section 15;

(c) Approval of the remaining proposed resource requirements, amounting to \$8,000 under section 29D;

(d) Approval of the requested resources for conference documentation services under section 2 in the amount of \$254,300.

12. Subject to its above comments and observations, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/71/L.23, an additional appropriation of \$254,300 would be required under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; \$390,800 under section 15, Human settlements; and \$8,000 under section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, representing a charge against the contingency fund.